

Subject: RE: EAA Land Lease Release for review

Date: Thursday, October 25, 2018 at 11:34:21 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Palmer, Ray

To: Schultz, Jason

CC: Collins, Stephen

Jason,

I have a couple of questions and minor revisions when you have a minute for me to stop by your desk.

Thanks,

Ray

From: Schultz, Jason

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 11:33 AM


To: Collins, Stephen <smcollins@sfwmd.gov>; Palmer, Ray <rpalmer@sfwmd.gov>

Subject: EAA Land Lease Release for review

Nov. XX, 2018

**SFWMD Governing Board Takes Action to Expedite Everglades
Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir Ahead of Federal Partners**

*District fulfills requirements of Senate Bill 10 and moves project forward by
reworking land lease and prepping land for construction of reservoir*



Click on the image to see SFWMD's interactive website keeping the public apprised of progress creating and obtaining federal approval and cost sharing for the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Storage Reservoir.

Miami, FL - The South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMD) Governing Board voted today to move full speed ahead and expedite the proposed Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Storage Reservoir project by opening the \$10 million bidding process for a construction contract to start the proposed reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee. The Governing Board also voted to fulfill a requirement in the state law that authorized the project by amending a land lease on the land slated for the reservoir.

"This Governing Board is in agreement that a year like 2018 cannot happen to our South Florida waterways again. If that means moving ahead of our federal partners to make the EAA reservoir a reality faster then we will take that action," said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Federico Fernandez.

"Directing staff to secure a construction contract is the next step to providing relief to the northern estuaries and sending clean water where it is needed most in America's Everglades."

The Florida Legislature authorized the reservoir through the passage of Senate Bill 10 in 2017 as a partnership with the federal government. The Florida Legislature has committed to funding the state's half of the estimated \$1.6 billion cost. The U.S. Congress authorized the project last month but Florida is still awaiting for the federal government to commit to funding its half of the project cost.

To continue to move ahead and eliminate possible delays, SFWMD is starting the construction process to make the reservoir a reality as quickly as possible. SFWMD's Governing Board approved starting the bidding process to hire a contractor to move more than 400,000 cubic yards of rock from the adjacent A-1 site to the site of the proposed reservoir and stage it on approximately 240 acres. This staging of materials to speed up the eventual construction would cost an estimated \$10 million.

The Governing Board was able to expedite this part of the process and utilize

the 240 acres by restructuring a lease on part of the land that will be utilized for the reservoir. According to Senate Bill 10, if there is an expiring lease on land owned or controlled by the state or SFWMD which has been identified as being necessary for the reservoir project, "the district shall execute, renegotiate, extend, or amend agreements, including reasonable notice and termination provisions, so that the land does not sit fallow and provides the maximum public benefit." The bill further states, "Any such agreements shall provide that agricultural operators shall be permitted to continue to farm on a field-by-field basis until such time as the agricultural operations are incompatible with site preparation, on-site investigation, or construction for an Everglades Agricultural Area reservoir project."

To fulfill this requirement of state law, the Governing Board amended an eight-year lease on about 16,700 acres being leased within the project's footprint. The amendments allow the District to revoke the lease on any part of that land after the first 20 months as long as the District gives 120 days notice and the Governing Board has approved a construction contract that will utilize the land.

While SFWMD is working to expedite the project, actions that could be raised by other state and federal agencies as well as an ongoing lawsuit by environmentalists over state restoration funding could delay the project. SFWMD General Counsel Brian Accardo gave the Governing Board a presentation about the actions being taken to expedite the reservoir process and some of the potential issues that could cause delays. That presentation can be seen by clicking [HERE](#).

About the EAA Storage Reservoir

Through an extensive process of scientific-based modeling and public meetings, SFWMD staff created the plan for the EAA Storage Reservoir. Together with authorized projects, the EAA Storage Reservoir will send an annual average of approximately 370,000 additional acre-feet of clean water south to the Everglades that will be protected by rule or reservation to benefit the natural system. It will also reduce the number of damaging discharge events from Lake Okeechobee to the northern estuaries by 63 percent when used in conjunction with authorized projects.

Additional flows south to the Everglades proposed in the plan will be treated in a new 6,500-acre Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) in combination with existing STAs and Flow Equalization Basins (FEBs), such as the A-1 FEB, to achieve state water quality standards. The reservoir will store 240,000 acre-feet

of water on the 10,100-acre site comprised of the District-owned A-2 parcel and lands to the west as identified in Senate Bill 10. The EAA Storage Reservoir will work in conjunction with Gov. Rick Scott's Restoration Strategies for a total of 350,000 acre-feet of storage south of Lake Okeechobee.

To read additional information related to the EAA Storage Reservoir or for modeling data and more information on the previously held meetings, including agendas and presentations, visit www.sfwmd.gov/eaareservoir.

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***The South Florida Water Management District** is a regional governmental agency that manages the water resources in the southern part of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. Our mission is to protect South Florida's water resources by balancing and improving flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems.*